

chronic brain-wasting a disorder," etc., without there being any reference made to the place where the description is to be found. An occasional failure of this kind is of course excusable, but it is so general with Dr. Spitzka as to interfere very materially with the use of his book by those desirous of studying with thoroughness the conditions of which he treats, or of verifying his statements.

There are a few wood-cuts, which are coarsely executed. The cut given on page 314 as a portrait of Dubourque, the "Fourteenth Street Assassin," may be a perfect ideal of monomania of persecution, but it is not in the least like Dubourque.

There are not many typographical errors. "Dagouet" is given for Dagonet, "Albutt" for Allbutt, "etat criblé" for état criblé, and "crampi" for cramps. Finding "crampi," however, repeated in the index (which, by the way, is an unusually good one), we are somewhat in doubt as to the word being a typographical error. If it is not, we frankly confess our ignorance of its meaning. It is not English, it is not French, it is not German, and it certainly is not Latin.

But notwithstanding the defects which we have found it necessary to point out, there can be no doubt that Dr. Spitzka's book is a great advance on the English treatises with which, heretofore, physicians in this country have been content. Indeed, if the tone of it were altered, personalities excluded, and fuller details given in regard to the treatment of the insane, we should find no great fault with it except such as must always be found by one writer commenting on the work of another, and which is solely due to the fact that the two hold different views relative to subjects upon which differences are allowable. Dr. Spitzka does not appear to recognize the right of any one to differ with him, and this constitutes an unpleasant feature of what would otherwise be a delightful book to peruse. He has sharp remarks, inuendoes, and sometimes rank abuse for those with whom he does not agree. This is certainly not in accordance with that liberty which constitutes the basis of all science. He ought to bear in mind that the individual who differs with him, for instance, in regard to the use of phosphorus in insanity, is not necessarily an ass; the one who believes all choreic children to be "morally imbecile," a knave; or he who employs statical electricity in his practice, a combination of both.

**Injuries of the Spine and Spinal Cord, without Apparent Mechanical Lesion and Nervous Shock, in their Surgical and Medico-Legal Aspects.** By HERBERT W. PAGE, M. A., M. C., Cantab. London: J. & A. Churchill, 1883, pp. 374.

Since the coinage of the term "railway spine," much confusion has arisen in neurological nosology, and many liberties have been taken in courts of law with the nomenclature of spinal diseases in particular. The collection of hybrid symptoms described by Mr. Erichsen, and published in his work, are those which every one may have, for, as a rule, they are subjective, and are always convenient in case of an accident, whether it be a fall upon a slippery sidewalk, or a shaking up in a railroad car. Mr. Erichsen's well-written book has undoubtedly been the means by which the treasuries of numerous railroad corporations have been depleted, both abroad and in this country, and cases of alleged "spinal concussion" are becoming more and more frequent. It cannot be disputed, therefore, that many of the vague symptoms which are detailed to sympathetic juries, are commonly trumped up by rogues and imposters.

Mr. Herbert Page now comes forward with a book in which the other side of the question from that considered by Mr. Erichsen, receives careful attention, and he has evidently had the experience, which enables him in a vigorous manner to show the unsubstantial character in most cases of the alleged injuries. Not the least interesting part of the book is the table of two hundred and thirty-four cases collected at random from the records of the courts, and from his own case-book. These records show that quite a large proportion of the litigants either recovered almost immediately after they had obtained a verdict, or when the lawsuit was settled. In these cases, and others which we meet daily, it appears that the real injury, if any exists, is a mental condition of an hysterical nature. It might be properly called "railway hypochondriasis," for the subjective expressions of the patient are peculiarly significant and familiar.

Mr. Page devotes chapters to the neuro-mimeses, the hysterical disturbances, and the examination of the patient; and considers fully the *real* injuries that may originate from spinal shock. In the chapter upon diagnosis, many useful hints are thrown out, and the attention of the reader is called to the unreliability of electrical tests in some cases, especially in those where hysterical anæsthesia exists.

It is to be hoped, now that Mr. Page's excellent work has appeared, that medical men will not be so willing to magnify the trifling nervous ailments of those persons who are only too ready to demand compensation for an injury that is more often one of the mind than the body.

A. Mc L. H.